Murari Committee's Recommendations on Fishermen

*134. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have set-up the Murari Committee to go into the problems of fishermen in the country;

(b) whether the said Committee has made certain recommendations;

(c) if so, the details of the main recommendations;

(d) whether Government have implemented those recommendations; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) Yes, Sir. In the wake of agitation by various fishermen's groups, the Government had constituted a Review Committee to make recommendations for review of the Deep Sea Fishing Policy.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The recommendations made by the Review Committee on deep sea fishing policy are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(d) and (e) The Government have recently taken decisions on the recommendations of the Review Committee and action has been initiated for implementing the decisions taken on these recommendations.

Statement

Recommendations of the Review Committee on Deep Sea Fishing Policy

1. All permits issued for fishing by joint venture/charter/lease/test fishing should immediately be cancelled subject to legal processes as may be required.

2. No renewal, extension or new licences/ permits be issued in future for fishing to joint venture/charter/least/test fishing vessels.

3. All licences/permits for fishing may be made public documents and copy thereof made available for inspection in the office of the registered authority.

4. The areas already being exploited or which may be exploited in the medium term by fishermen operating traditional craft or mechanised vessels below 20 m size should not be permitted for exploitation by any vessels above 20 m. length except currently operated Indian vessels which may operate in the current area for only 3 years subject to the recommendations 1 & 7.

5. Since the Indian mechanised boats below 20 m size have the capacity to fish in deths upto about 70-90 m; on the West Coast, the distance from the shore represented by 150 m depth line should be out of bounds for all vessels of more than 20 m length except vessels mentioned at para 4. Where the 150 m depth zone is less than 100 nautical miles from the shore, the distance upto 100 nautical miles should be reserved for Indian vessels less than 20 m length. On the east coast, starting from Kanyakumari, Indian vessels below 20 m size would have exclusive access upto 100 m depth or 50 nautical miles from the shore whichever is farther except relaxation in Para 4. The depth zone would also be defined by coordinates indicating distance from the shore. Distance will be determined by National Hydregraphic Office/Coast Guard/Fishery Survey of India.

6. In regard to Andaman & Nicobar and the Lakshadweep groups of islands, a distance of 50 nautical miles from the shore would be reserved exclusively for Indian vessels below 20m length with proviso at para 4. Further, if so, required, the limit would be defined taking into account the need to keep waters between islands reserved exclusively for Indian vessels, even if some portions fall beyond the limit of 50 nautical miles.

7. In the area open to the vessels above 20m length, resource specific vessels for tuna and tuna like fishes, squids and cuttle fish, deep sea fin-fishes in mid-water or pelagic regions and oceanic tuna may be allowed for exploitation by tuna long lining, tuna purse seining, squid jigging and mid-water trawling, provided these are defacto Indian owned registered vessels. The Indian owners shou account for at least 51% debt as well as equ

80. The fleet size for different fish grounds may be fixed taking into accoun the maximum sustainable yield and the ne for conservation of resources.

9. In order to conserve fishery resources in our waters, to protect fishermen and to reduce conflicts in the sea, deep sea fishing regulations should be enacted by the Parliament after consulting the fishing community.

10. For prventing conflicts between the traditional, small mechanised, larger deep sea vessels strict vigilance to be exercised by the Coast Guard. To attain this objective the Coast Guard should be strengthened, expanded, upgraded technically with the State-of-the-art system of navigation, surveillance and weaponary and properly tasked to prevent poaching by foreign vessels and observance of zone restriction by indigenous vessels. In case Coast Guard is not able to perform the task then by some other agency State or Central, would be identified to ensure that those vessels excluded from specific areas do not violate prohibitions.

11. The Government should take active steps as well as make finances available for upgradation of technological skills and equipment used by the traditional fishermen, for mechanised boats and the Indian deep sea fishing fleet so that each can effectively fish in the areas reserved for it by law or usage. Duty concessions and concessional finance should be made available for both navigational as well as fishing equipment aimed at competence upgradation to the State-of-the-art level to all the three categories with priority to the traditional sector.

12. Traditional and small mechanised sector should be assisted by adequate regular supply of fuel and by providing HSD and kerosene and by providing subsidy taking into account the benefits given to deep sea fishing vessels.

13. All types of marine fisheries should come under one Ministry. The Government should also consider setting up a Fishery Authority of India to function in the manner in which such authorities set up in other countries function and to be responsible for formulation of policies as well as their implementation.

14. The Fishery Survey of India should also be technically upgraded by induction of the modern technology and equipment so that it can identify and map the location of all types of fish, study impact of different technologies and ecological changes. There should be proper coordination and cooperation between the National Remote Sensing Agencies and the Fishery Survey of India for this purpose.

15. The Government should give priority to the creation of the infrastructure needed for preventing wastage of fishery resources which is occurring through throwing away by-catch. This may be achieved by providing a chain of cold storages, ice factories, fish processing facilities, fish meal and feed manufacturing for value addition to the products of fishermen and their cooperatives.

16. Infrastructure facilities such as fishing harbours for the existing and modern upgraded craft aong East and West Coasts as well as in island groups of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands may be created on priority basis.

17. Fishermen/fisherwomen and their cooperatives may be provided with financial assistance for upgradation and acquisition of larger vessels for marketing and other related activities.

18. The Government should give priority to training fishermen/fisherwomen in handling new equipment, larger vessels and new fishing techniques besides fish handling and processing aspects.

19. Government should take effective steps to tackle the menace of pollutants/effluents/ sewage let out by industries which affects marine life adversely.

20. Government should take a decision on the recommendations of the Committee within a period of six months.

21. The deep sea fishing policy should be revised periodically say every 3—5 years.

Doubling of Kollom-Trivandrum rail line

*135. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the doubling of the Railway line between Kollom-Trivandrum is slowed down;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) by when the doubling of the line will be completed?